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ABSTRACT

This practicum was designed to provide expertise to five child development associates and ten teacher assistants working in two preschool programs for migrant children. Emphasis was on the enhancement of program-related planning, curriculum development, curriculum implementation, and reporting skills. Weekly inservice workshops were developed and presented, in accordance with an agenda that incorporated praise for accomplishments, discussion of blunders, new action planning, follow-up, personal and professional development, and training sessions. Interviews, classroom observations, and school records were consulted to determine the effectiveness of the intervention program. The results indicated that the child development associates and teacher assistants were more able to complete school district and program-required paperwork with greater accuracy than before the intervention. The participants also reported feeling more comfortable in the classroom and less intimidated by classroom visits from the program administrator. (Two appendixes contain copies of the classroom evaluation form and survey of job description awareness. Contains 24 references.) (MDM)

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Building Skills of Child Development Associates In Public School Settings Through Weekly Inservice Sessions

by

Judith A. Karnes

Cluster 45

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A Practicum II Report Presented to the
Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA UNIVERSITY

1994

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

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July 25, 1994

This practicum report was submitted by Judith A. Karnes under the direction of the adviser listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

Approved:

August 21 1994
Date of Final Approval of Report

June S. Delano
June S. Delano, Ph.D., Adviser

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ABSTRACT

Building Skills of Child Development Associates In Public School Settings Through Weekly Inservice Sessions. Karnes, Judith A., 1994: Practicum Report, Nova Southeastern University, Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies. Inservice Training/Early Childhood/Child Development Associates/Prekindergarten/Migrant/Resource Teachers/Team Building/Communication/Management

This practicum was designed to provide expertise for Child Development Associates (CDAs) working in public school settings with consideration given to program-related planning, curriculum, implementation, and reporting procedures. Mini-inservice workshops were presented weekly within the work setting of the participants during duty hours.

The writer developed an agenda for team meetings which incorporated praise for accomplishments, discussion of blunders, new action planning, follow up, personal/ professional development, and celebration; prepared weekly training sessions; conducted inservice training for CDAs and assistants; and coached individual CDAs.

Analysis of the data revealed that the participants were more able to complete public school district and program-required paper work with greater accuracy. The participants ceased reports of feeling intimidated by the presence of the MPRT in the classroom and described ways in which the MPRT's visits were helpful. Team building skills were continually stressed and some improvement was evident.

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July 25, 1994 Judith A. Karnes

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Work Setting and Community

The site chosen for this practicum is a small city in which the main industry of the town is agricultural support services. The majority of the town's population is bilingual and/or migrant.

There are three elementary schools located in the city, all of which are designated Chapter I schools. The migrant preschool programs of two of the schools, referred to as School A and School B for the purposes of this document, were designated as the responsibility of the writer. Both of the schools served prekindergarten through fifth grade students. According to statistics obtained from the school's registrar, the School A population of 1,104 students was comprised of 1,010 Black students, 81 Hispanic students, and 13 Caucasian students. The 726 students at School B were comprised of 513 Blacks, 203 Hispanics, and 10 Caucasians. At School A, 983 of the 1,104 students qualified for the free/reduced lunch program according to federal guidelines. School B had 717 of the 726 students qualified for the free/reduced lunch program.

Writer's Work Setting and Role

The population involved consisted of five Child Development Associate Instructors (CDAs) and 10 teacher assistants who worked with 105 identified migrant preschool children three and four years of age. The writer was the Migrant Prekindergarten Resource Teacher (MPRT) responsible for the smooth operation of the five classrooms as a mentor for the adults in the five classrooms.

The migrant program was a ten-hour program with students in class from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. The writer was in each classroom three to five hours per week on a rotating basis. The morning assistants were in each classroom 7:00 a. m. to 3:30 p.m. The CDAs were in each classroom at School A 7:45 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. and at School B 7:30 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. The afternoon assistants arrived for duty at 8:30 a.m. and stayed until the buses came for the students at 5:00 p.m.

Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning, Revised Edition (DIAL-R) (1983) and the Florida State Objectives for Migrant Students were the main guidelines for what skills were to be taught by the CDAs. Included in the objectives and assessment instrument were motor skills--gross, fine, and self-help; speech-related skills; general knowledge and comprehension skills--body parts, color, design, time, quantity, direction, classifying, situations, objects, community, and services; written language skills;

and math skills.

School A had seventy-eight teachers and four permanent substitute teachers who covered classes on a day-to-day basis. This count included two art teachers, two music teachers, two physical education teachers, one Migrant Advocate Teacher, one 3/5 time Pre-k Resource Teacher, one teacher under special assignment as Chapter 1 Coordinator, one Guidance Counselor, and one Media Specialist.

School B had fifty-six teachers and two permanent substitutes. Included in this count were a music teacher, an art teacher, a physical education teacher, a 2/5 Migrant Advocate Teacher, a 2/5 Migrant Prekindergarten Resource Teacher, a Guidance Counselor, and a Media Specialist.

The writer holds a Bachelor of Arts degree with majors in psychology and education and minors in social sciences, science, and Spanish. Her Master of Arts degree is in marriage and family counseling with additional courses in guidance counseling. She used many of her teaching and counseling skills in church settings as well as school settings.

The writer had been a teacher's assistant, substitute teacher, a school bus driver for handicapped children, and a classroom teacher. Her certification areas are Early Childhood, Elementary, and Guidance PK-12, with an ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) endorsement. Prior to her present assignment as the Migrant Prekindergarten

Resource Teacher, she had taught prekindergarten, first grade, third grade, fourth grade, and sixth grade. She had experience teaching in public schools (ten years), private day school (two and one half years), and private parochial school (two and one half years). She home schooled her own two children for their first grade and preschool years respectively, then returned to the classroom when both children were old enough to be in school for the full day. A total of 16 years has been spent as a classroom teacher.

The writer had special training to serve in various leadership capacities. She was trained by Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), the regional accreditation board, to be part of an evaluation team and three times served in that capacity. She co-conducted training workshops on learning/teaching strategies for other teachers in her own school and other schools in the county. She was trained to be a peer teacher on a Professional Orientation Program team and has served in that capacity four years. As grade group chairperson for two years, she had additional responsibilities helping teachers who were new to the profession and/or new to the school. For two years she served as co-chairperson of the School Advisory Council which developed and monitored implementation of the School Improvement Plan, secretary for the Instructional Innovations Team one year, and chairperson of the Technology Team four years.

The writer was recognized for her professional contributions within her community. She served on the Village Educational Advisory Board and was a member of the Child Care Advisory Committee for the (County) Technical Education Center.

The writer has also been active in professional organizations such as her local teachers' organization, National Education Association, International and (state) Association of Reading Teachers, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, American Educational Research Association, the National Science Teachers Association, and (state) Association of Science Teachers.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

The problem was 15 non-certified persons were placed in instructional-type positions and did not have professional expertise to carry out an effective program. Some of the participants had received Child Development Associate (CDA) certification which was a competency-based program. In order to receive their certification, the candidates had to present a portfolio of professional accomplishments. However, it was a program requiring child care skills which were different from regular certified classroom teachers.

Problem Documentation

Evidence of the problem culled from the work site included such incidences as the fact that every time the Resource Teacher offered to help with site-specific requirements, the CDAs replied, "I can do it!"; however, in eight separate incidences, the work had been returned to be redone when submitted to the principal, assistant principal, or area office as final copies of the requested material.

Other MPRT's at neighboring schools described similar

situations at their work sites.

The assistant principal at School B called the MPRT into the office and said the CDAs and the assistants were intimidated by the presence of the MPRT in the classroom.

Causative Analysis

The problem of non-certified teachers in teaching situations manifested itself in the following ways:

First, as a communication problem, the CDAs did not know the vocabulary of education and the Resource Teacher was not sure what the CDA training had been. Also, cultural differences in vocabulary and concepts/frame of reference made accurate communication difficult.

Second, as an educational level problem, the CDAs had a high school diploma with minimal child care training. In addition, the CDAs who were placed in instructional-type positions were resistant to input from the Resource Teacher and did not have professional expertise to carry out an effective program to meet public school expectations.

Finally, as a management problem, five areas seemed to have prevalent cause for scrutiny. The CDAs had previous experience in day care centers, but these were public school centers and some procedures were new and different for them. People have a natural resistance to change. The CDAs perceived the MPRT as a threat. The CDAs perceived asking for or receiving help as saying they did not know their job.

Having CDAs in the preschool classrooms was a new venture and no-one seemed to know what to expect of them or the MPRT.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

Shulman (1988) found that many of the proposals associated with current attempts at school reform emphasized the importance of shared expertise among educators. Fear of vulnerability and insecurity kept new teachers from forming any collegial relationships which could make a crucial difference. During a preobservation conference with a novice teacher she discovered the neophyte was nervous about her ability, concerned about the observation visit, and "just plain worried that she wasn't up to the task of teaching in general" (p. 32-33).

During another observation visit, Shulman (1988) reported, a new teacher had absolutely no idea how to go about using the professional tools available. There was no concept of how to organize ideas into lesson plans nor did the teacher's creative talents translate into planned units.

Shulman (1988) published from the perspective of one who worked as a mentor for teachers entering their first position after four years of college. The qualifications for certification as a CDA include a high school diploma and specific child care training.

According to the literature the child care training consisted of six goals and thirteen competencies. In

general, the goals and competencies were combined to form the following points. The first goal ensured a safe and healthy learning environment. The second goal provided for the advancement of competence in the physical and intellectual paradigms. Goal three was concerned that a positive emotional and social environment exists for the children. By enlisting the aid of the family support system to achieve a favorable relationship with the program, the CDA would maintain communication with all parties involved with each child which was the focus of goal four. Goal five was related to the competencies a CDA must have in order to provide proper program management. Goal six, which was the final goal, was the commitment of the CDA to the profession in the form of a continuing educational program for skills enhancement in the areas of early childhood theories and practices (CDA National Credentialing Program, 1989; Gault, 1989).

While these are the goals and competencies for the CDA training, this in no way compares to the extensive training involved in obtaining a state classroom teacher's certificate. This was most obvious in the areas of lesson planning, child development stages, and scope and sequencing of materials. Wadlington (1990) surveyed 145 child care workers 97 of whom held CDA Credentials or were working on credentialing. She reported an average of 13 years of formal schooling for those who took part in the

survey, which in no way compares to the sixteen years of formal education for a beginning teacher.

Hegler (1986) wrote of teachers' first year in the classroom. The teachers' first year experience was comparable to CDAs' circumstances during their first year in the classroom as being a crucial, formative time. The new teachers expressed the management of student behavior was the area with which they needed the most help, but the majority were reluctant to consult building administrators or veteran teachers for fear of appearing incompetent. CDAs expressed the same feeling of insecurity.

Mann (1989) found 80% of the teachers surveyed by Metropolitan Life identified "no time for sharing notes with other teachers" (p. 40) as a major barrier to their capability to do better in their classrooms. Since CDAs were functioning as teachers, the need for information exchange and the absence of time for learning from each other was even more critical due to the lack of formalized college training.

Costa (1993) reported several different problems. The time constraints of planning, organization, and implementation were not conducive to an optimum situation. CDAs encountered the same classroom isolation which was compounded by the fact that they were often not perceived to be part of the rest of the school. The isolation factor diminished the possible contacts that would increase valuable opportunities for communication and positive reinforcement.

Staff (1993) reported that Mark Friedman as assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction in Lincolnwood, Illinois, was asked to develop a plan for early childhood for his school district. "When changes in instruction were proposed, some teachers felt an 'invalidation' of what they had been doing in the classroom" (p. 5), a response similar to what the CDAs expressed when the MPRT suggested changes.

Stremmel and Powell (1990) found, specifically from the child care setting, a great significance in the interactions involved in the exchange of information between co-workers and supervisors. The feedback which child care workers received from their support staff which included their directors and co-workers was considered to be a valuable source of information. This input of information was a major portion of how they perceived their accomplishments in the child care setting when evaluating their own performance.

Leibowitz, Schlossberg, and Shore (1991) found similar circumstances with business workers. New workers had an intense need for site-specific information. They indicated a need to know what the expectations of their own job were and how their particular job was part of the entire scope of the work setting. The employees who were interviewed expressed a need to know the "formal policies and procedures" (p. 45), but they also wanted to know information pertaining to the unwritten policies such as the power structure in office politics.

Leibowitz, Schlossberg, and Shore (1991) also reported about the need for a newcomer to feel competent in an unfamiliar job. Some of the interviewees stated they were afraid to ask questions of their supervisor or co-workers for fear of appearing incompetent.

Therefore, the review of the literature identified commonalities between the experiences of the CDAs, beginning teachers, and new business workers. No matter what the work setting, feelings of expectations and insecurities were comparable. The need for some type of on-the-job training appeared to be parallel. And opportunities for professional peer interactions were essential.

Chapter III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

The goal of this practicum was the non-professionals would have enough proficiency to carry out the program meeting professional expectations.

Expected Outcomes

1. By the end of implementation at least four of the five teaching CDAs would do their work correctly as evidenced by lesson plans and other required paper work.
2. By the end of implementation at least four of the five teaching CDAs and six of the ten assistants would show trust and respect for each other and the MPRT as evidenced by the cessation of reports of intimidation replaced by positive comments regarding the MPRT's classroom visits (Appendix A).
3. By the end of implementation each team member would acknowledge the roles and responsibilities of every other team member as reported on a survey with a score of 12 out of 16 items (Appendix B).

Measurement of Outcomes

As measurement for item one above, the lesson plan books were checked on a fortnightly basis prior to submitting to the principal or assistant principal. Attendance report forms were checked on a monthly basis before submission to the area office and the attendance recorded in the record book was checked to make certain of matching statistics. DIAL-R test and report forms were checked as soon as they were completed before sending them to the area office.

Measurement of outcome two was assessed by the cessation of reports of intimidation replaced by positive comments regarding the MPRT's classroom visits (Appendix A).

Outcome three was measured by the distribution and collection of the survey developed by the MPRT (Appendix B) with each CDA and assistant expected to score at least 12 correct of the 16 items.

A daily log was kept to record any unexpected incidences, problems, or outcomes which had not been addressed as foreseeable.

The writer provided a narrative report of the responses collected from items one, two, and three as part of the final report.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

The problem was 15 non-certified persons were placed in instructional-type positions and did not have professional expertise to carry out an effective program.

The literature suggested several possible solutions for increasing the skills of the CDAs, building management techniques for the MPRT, and improving communication among all individuals involved at the work setting.

Sgan and Clark (1986) found teacher support teams beneficial and suggested several strategies which might be enlisted to achieve improvement in the skills of beginning teachers. The techniques they suggested were in two categories. The first category dealt with supervision, coaching, and peer group discussion. The second category focused upon training in the form of workshops, conferences, and staff development.

Hegler (1986) recommended a support teacher to assist new teachers. She suggested specific duties for the position of support teacher. One of the responsibilities of the support teacher would be observing the new teacher while

actual instruction was occurring. During regularly scheduled visits, suggestions would be offered for the classroom that included specific information regarding areas where the support teacher perceived weaknesses or where the beginning teacher felt insecure. The support teacher would also model lessons and instructional strategies.

Mentor teachers were also found to be helpful by Shulman (1988). Mentor teachers employed peer coaching as one technique that was useful. Peer coaching was described as teachers of the same grade level or subject area observing each other during times of instruction and giving constructive feedback after the observation. These interactions were intended to be sources of confirmation of mutual competence as well as opportunities to improve classroom practices. Combined with in-service, support from building administrators, and follow-up conferences, peer coaching activities aimed at support could make a crucial difference with beginning teachers and with CDAs.

The school district in which this practicum was being implemented supplied a support person instead of a whole support team. This left one person doing the job of many. Wearing so many hats sometimes resulted in fragmentation and confusion for all involved. The designated support person for the CDAs was the MPRT.

Drew and Law (1990) recommended continuing staff development. Their advised procedure was to use modeling

and follow-through to have a successful early childhood program. They stressed the importance of ensuring that the focus of the early childhood program must be developmentally appropriate.

When Mark Friedman wanted to implement his plan for an early childhood program in the Lincolnwood, Illinois, school district training the staff was a primary focus. He tried to let the resistant teachers know that research had shown us other ways to do things. He held staff development sessions emphasizing diverse instructional strategies (Staff, 1993).

Abbott-Shim (1990) found in-service training for child care providers was crucial for high-quality care. She stressed the importance of a well-trained staff. Needs assessment was conducted. Following the assessment, quality consultants were hired to conduct staff development sessions to address the areas of concern. Follow-up classroom visitations that were subsequent to the training sessions were recommended to insure implementation. Abbott-Shim (1990) reiterated by saying "the real potential in achieving high-quality child care can only be realized as staff training is provided on a continuous basis. . . . Lack of financial resources, combined with undertrained and often inexperienced staff members, calls for [creativity] in planning in-service training" (p. 18).

Mallory and Goldsmith (1990) reported that much of Head Start's success during its first 25 years of existence was

attributable to the training and technical assistance provided for the child care workers in the program. They mentioned special federal and state funding were provided specifically for the training of CDAs to work with Head Start children. The point was made that program quality could be maintained only through initial training and continuing technical assistance for the child care workers.

Also reporting on the success of the Head Start program during its first 25 years of operation, Greenberg (1990) found that Head Start classrooms were developmentally appropriate. The main reason for the classrooms being developmentally appropriate was early childhood educators were very active in helping to set the standards and providing staff development for the child care workers.

Schorr (1989) wrote that there were several critical elements to success. He found that comprehensive and intensive programs showed success with young children. Time and training were two organizational skills he considered important. Other elements were concerned with the more personal or emotional needs of children. In particular, building trust and respect in the relationships with children and their families were critical ingredients of successful child care programs. If all of these components were present, then a successful child care program would exist (Schorr, 1989).

Again, with 25-year hindsight as her ally and with Head

Start in mind, Lombardi (1990) recommended that training should be on-going. The training should be competency-based. Supervision by a more experienced child care worker should be included, staff/child interaction and staff/parent interaction should be at its core for continued success and high quality.

As mentioned earlier in this document, the district in which this practicum was implemented had in place a Migrant Prekindergarten Resource Teacher (MPRT) to work with the CDAs and the children in each classroom on a rotating basis to provide supervision and support. A separate person, the Migrant Advocate, was responsible for doing home visits and working with the parents of the children in the migrant early childhood program. Communication between the MPRT and the Migrant Advocate occurred at Migrant Resource meetings.

Strong, Silver, Hanson, Marzano, Wolfe, Dewing, and Brock (1990) wrote from the perspective of collaborating staff developers. These staff developers were trying to synthesize the vast amount of knowledge which has exploded in the field of education over the last 20 years. In terms of the need for staff development with the CDAs, Strong et al. (1990) communicated that even well-educated teachers needed to keep abreast of what was happening in the field of education with additional professional training. It stands to reason that with at least a three-year deficit in training compared to certified teachers, the CDAs could and would

benefit from on-going staff development while working in child care settings.

For the purposes of this practicum, the writer chose to use a definition of staff development taken from Griffin. He stated, "Staff development means any systematic attempt to alter the professional practices, beliefs, and understandings of school persons toward an articulated end" (Griffin, 1983, p. 2).

L. Lezotte (personal communication, January 13, 1994) made the statement "80% of any problem is management and any person who works for a school board has management as part of his/her job description." With that in mind, it was, therefore, reasonable to conclude that at least part of the described problem with the pre-school workers was a management problem.

As the writer searched for available literature pertaining to management/administration, the idea of team-building surfaced as a viable option for the setting in which the practicum was to take place. Various authors suggested establishing a team atmosphere and described the benefits of helping workers to perform in teams.

Abelson and Woodman (1983) gave the definition of a team. They defined it as "two or more interdependent individuals who work and communicate directly in a coordinated manner in order to reach an agreed upon goal(s)" (p. 126). The writer was thinking of this definition as the

basis for the flow of ideas about building teams with the paraprofessionals at both schools.

Sanborn (1989) delineated between a team and a group. For a team to exist, they must be functioning with the following in mind: goal-focused, team agenda, effective, participative management, self-starters, linkage between individual performance and team performance, interdependent, enjoy who they work with and what they are doing, sense of urgency creates performance, and thrive on challenge. A non-team group seemed to be task-focused, personal agenda, efficient, autocratic, individual performance objectives, independent or over dependent, tolerate each other and what they do, and they avoid risk.

Leibowitz, Schlossberg, and Shore (1971) used self-managed peer groups when helping newcomers integrate into the culture of the work place. They wanted to meet the needs of the new workers by providing training sessions one day per month. During that training new employees were taught about the organization and how each individual job fit in with the entire company endeavor. New employees also were assisted with individual development plans which mapped out a specific plan of training for the first two years with the company. Part of the individual plan also included guided self-learning whereby the employer provided a workbook about the company. In the workbook were questions and activities which would, upon completion, guide a new employee to learn about

the organization before embarking on job-specific tasks.

Lindsay (1992) emphasized being part of a team improved motivation. Team members felt that the team needed them. "The feeling that 'the team is depending on me' motivates members to put forth maximum effort" (p. 35).

Wellins (1992) found self-directed work teams were successful if an organization concentrated on forming teams that would put planning at the top of its priority list. Second, careful consideration should be given to new personnel--are they or can they become team players? Third, all workers should be included in three areas of on-the-job-training: skills necessary for success with job performance, communication and interpersonal skills, recognizing and identifying problems, and carrying out plans to improve the situation once problems are detected. A fourth consideration in establishing effective teams involves training leaders to be coaches and resource people instead of bosses. Last, but very important, reward team efficiency.

Sgan and Clark (1986) included several items for attention in their description of high priorities for working in teams. It was important to have the team correlate multiple strategies suitable for solving the specific issue. The responsibilities of each team member should be exact and clearly understood. Team meetings must be scheduled on a regular basis and, preferably, written on a team calendar the first time they meet together to organize. Sgan and Clark

(1986) also recommended that copious notes be kept for the activities of all team members whether carried out at a team meeting or as a follow-up assigned activity.

Sanborn (1989) found what he called "four C's of effective team management: commitment, cooperation, communication, and contribution." These specific areas were the values upon which all team work was to be built. Part of commitment referred to every person of the team being aware of the whole organizational goal. Cooperation applied to the fact that contributing to the team effort was not an option. All team members were to use good communication skills which included listening to each other as well as sharing ideas with each other. Sanborn (1989) suggested the team leader ask what each team member especially liked to do. After listening to responses, if it was feasible to do so, try to let each person contribute in the area in which she/he found most enjoyment. Share the less desirable tasks evenly if there was no one who enjoyed a particular necessary duty.

Sanborn (1989) found team meetings were most effective if they were quick, exciting, and powerful. His formula for a powerful team meeting followed a format such as:

1. Roses and Onions (accomplishments and blunders from the past week)
2. Follow up on last meeting (identify progress on project assignments)

3. New action planning (what needs to be done in the next month; who is willing to do it; what resources will be needed)
4. Rewards and Recognition (over the course of two to three months everyone gets some kind of recognition)
5. Professional and/or personal development (10-15 minute clip of video or excerpt of audio cassette tape or guest speaker or mini-inservice)
6. Announcements
7. Celebrations (weekly or monthly).

Shelton (1986) emphasized interpersonal skills were critical for a good team leader. He underscored the significance of self-esteem and its effect on everything else you do. He warned of the essential quality of keeping your mind thinking positively since you are the example for the members of the team.

Shelton (1986) shared the importance of using team members' names by saying "the most precious thing you can use when building teams is a person's name--over and over and over" (audio-cassette tape). He recommended spending at least seven minutes per day with each team member personally.

Communication was identified as one of the perceived causes for the problem in the work setting. The literature having to do with current educational reform efforts indicated that communication among teachers or those in the teaching field was a problem which extended beyond the

writer's work with CDAs.

Costa (1993) projected that reforms in education would require time for collaboration among educators. She envisioned interaction between teachers of various age levels and or grade levels.

Abbott-Shim (1990) placed high importance on regularly scheduled meetings where the teachers could discuss what they were doing in their classrooms. She felt opportunities for sharing ideas and materials were a must for the improvement of child care services.

Stremmel and Powell (1990) found the most satisfied child care workers were those who received helpful classroom information from their directors. They reported that child care workers also appreciated beneficial staff meetings. A third factor which contributed to child care workers' enjoyment of their jobs was feedback communicated by the director regarding the effectiveness of the child care worker in the classroom.

Mann (1989) documented the fact that 80% of the teachers surveyed by Metropolitan Life indicated that lack of time for communicating with other teachers hindered their effectiveness or limited their ability to perform their tasks better. Mann (1989) suggested a change of venue for teachers' meetings. He suggested something similar to business luncheons away from campus or long weekend seminars at a hotel or resort modeled after doctors' seminars.

Description of Selected Solution

A review of the perceived causes for the problem reminded the writer that one component appeared to relate to communication. A second source seemed to be an educational level problem. The third element emerged as a management problem. The writer consulted literature pertaining to each category and decided to pursue the use of strategies contained in each of the three areas to try to improve the situation.

Gleaning insight from the literature, the writer decided to address each of these areas through regularly scheduled weekly staff meetings. The communication problem was addressed as two issues. Through reading the literature, the MPRT gained some knowledge about what the CDAs had been taught. Effective communication was addressed as part of the weekly staff meetings and educational terms were taught as part of the professional/personal development time.

Second, as an educational level problem, many of the authors consulted through the literature review suggested staff development was valuable whether offered through seminars or as part of team meetings. The writer decided to incorporate staff development on a scheduled weekly basis with mini-inservice interjected as needs arose.

Finally, addressing the management issue, the writer decided to use team-building strategies as mentioned in the literature review. The MPRT solicited anonymous papers on

the concerns of the participants. Expectation levels were established which included values, cooperation, a mission statement, and goals. The MPRT informed and trained the CDAs and assistants as a part of each meeting. Job descriptions for each team member's position were shared. Team vs. Group vs. Individual endeavors and advantages of team work were discussed. A sense of purpose was created through cooperative team actions in forming a mission statement. Measurable goals were set for the team members to accomplish before the next meeting. The CDAs and assistants were surveyed to establish a list of possible rewards.

Each weekly team meeting was planned to follow this proposed agenda (Sanborn, 1990):

1. Accomplishments and blunders were discussed.
2. Follow up was done on any tasks assigned the last meeting.
3. New action planning to be accomplished before the next meeting was done and new tasks pertaining to the planning were assigned.
4. Rewards and recognition were expressed.
5. A professional and/or personal development topic was included.
6. Announcements and reminders about what needed to be done by the next meeting were included before closure.

7. Celebration of accomplishments occurred at least once per month.

Keeping this general agenda in mind, a calendar for implementation was developed and the following action was taken.

Report of Action Taken

Prior to the first meeting, the MPRT discussed the practicum proposal with each building principal and obtained permission to proceed within each school site. A chronology for weekly meetings was established.

The first weekly meeting was scheduled and conducted according to the sample agenda. For the 10-15 minute Professional/Personal development section there was a brief discussion of district job descriptions and expectations for Resource Teacher, CDAs, and assistants to establish what we could expect from each other. Explanation and solicitation of anonymous papers with concerns of the participants proceeded as CDAs and assistants were asked, "Would you, please, help me with my task and finish this? If I was Resource Teacher, I would _____."

For the second meeting the proposed agenda was followed. During professional/personal development time team-building concepts were shared with the CDAs and assistants followed by a discussion of the differences between work groups and teams. The MPRT shared her desire for the adults to function

as a team at each school. There was also a discussion of what needed to happen for teams to function vs. work groups.

The third weekly team meeting followed the previous agenda. For the professional/personal development time a mission statement was established. Since each school already had a "mission statement," the CDAs and assistants decided to post reminders of why they chose to be a CDA or child care assistant. They used such phrases as: be a role model; build each child's self-esteem; help each child learn new things; and children are curious and want to learn.

The MPRT brought snack cakes and the participants celebrated during the professional/personal development time for the Week 4 meeting. Accomplishments were emphasized. The MPRT also noticed a pattern developing where the CDAs and assistants were unwilling to acknowledge "blunders." It was noted in the daily log book kept by the MPRT.

From this point on, the pattern set by the agenda for the meetings for each week was followed with every fourth meeting a celebration. Specifically, for week 5, professional/personal development time was used to establish one or two team goals and one or two personal goals. An example of a team goal suggested by the CDAs and assistants: "cover the State Migrant Objectives." Five of the assistants listed as one of their personal goals: "take courses to get CDA certificate."

The issue of values (personal and work-related) was

addressed and the participants came to an agreement of terms and expectations.

Expectations for commitment, cooperation, communication, and contributions from each team member were discussed during the seventh weekly meeting.

The MPRT brought cookies. The CDAs, assistants, and MPRT celebrated "team wins" as part of the eighth meeting.

Team members expressed what was considered rewarding. Their suggestions included more money, compensatory time, more money, shorter work hours, more money. The subject of money had come up before, but during this meeting the CDAs were quite vocal about their displeasure about having to do everything the certified teachers were doing but for approximately half the pay check. The additional education of the certified teachers was mentioned, but the CDAs insisted they should be paid the same money for what they perceived to be the same job. As the personal/professional time expired, the MPRT pointed out that the items they had mentioned as their most desired rewards were beyond the realm of her authority to change. They then suggested sodas as an occasional reward.

Job preferences were discussed regarding what needed to be done in the classroom (what each one especially liked to do and really did not like to do). Agreement was reached for who did what for the most enjoyment possible.

For instance, one class organized in such a way that

each day for specific learning activity time, on a simultaneously rotating group basis, the CDA did the introduction of new concepts, one assistant supervised the art area, and one assistant reviewed concepts or worked with a manipulative activity. At meal time, the CDA supervised hand-washing and brushing teeth for both meals. The A.M. assistant picked up and served breakfast and the P.M. assistant cleaned up after the meal. The roles reversed for lunch.

A check of the State Objectives covered to this point was made and plans were made for including those which had still not been addressed.

Ten quick team wins were identified and we celebrated by the MPRT buying a soda for each participant.

Three MPRTs had previously arranged for a combined meeting to train the CDAs under each of their charges with skills needed to administer the DIAL-R. After an entire afternoon spent on one skill area, the MPRTs decided to continue the training at their respective school sites with fewer CDAs in each group. This MPRT used demonstration and practice to train the CDAs and assistants in the administration of the Motor Skills section of the DIAL-R for student assessment. She then had the adults practice on each other before trying with the children. When the MPRT checked the recording of the Motor Skills section and there were still errors, she borrowed a second DIAL-R kit and changed to

individually working along side each CDA for the assessment of four to five children and the CDAs were told to do all of the testing themselves. The two assistants were to supervise the rest of the children as they played quietly in play centers.

The CDAs were individually trained in the administration of the Concepts section of the DIAL-R in the same individualized manner. All CDAs were subsequently trained in the administration of the Language section of the DIAL-R. The CDAs were shown how to do the paper work required by the district and the state for reporting the DIAL-R results.

Completion of administering the DIAL-R was CELEBRATED.

The CDAs were trained in using the DIAL-R results for developing class lesson plans and individual emphasis plans.

Enumeration of which State Objectives had been covered for each age level was checked and discussed in order to see what still needed to be done. Plans were made for specific objectives.

The MPRT brought snacks and celebration occurred.

Re-evaluation: Were we meeting our mission statement phrases? How were we doing on our goals? Did we need to make any adjustments?

At this point, a note is needed to explain a difficulty which arose that may have affected the outcome of the remainder of the practicum experience. Prior to this, two CDAs and one assistant had mentioned several times that they

wanted to read what the MPRT had written in this Practicum that they were hearing about and participating in. The MPRT had delayed showing them the proposal as advised by the principal at School B. At this point, without having seen the document, those three individuals went to the assistant principal (AP) and told her that the MPRT was writing things that were not true. The AP privately called the MPRT into the office and asked if everything which had been written could be substantiated. The MPRT assured her that there was documentation of each problem described. The AP did not demand that the CDAs and assistant be allowed to read the document, however, she did ask if the writer was aware that those individuals wanted to read what had already been written. Subsequent to the incident with the AP, the two CDAs and one assistant said they wanted to read the document before they cooperated any further. Upon completion of reading only the problem statement they became angry and denied the existence of <u>any</u> problems. This resulted in an increase in negative responses and a road block to the positive response which had been building up to that point.

State Objectives which still needed to be covered were discussed and written in the appropriate plan book of each CDA.

This portion of the practicum was set aside for each class to have a specific "time to shine" through separate class presentations for their parents. The original intent

was to have one class program each week with individual articles submitted to the local newspaper to highlight each class. However, the CDAs at each school chose to combine their classes for one program at each site.

Several activities were planned for each classroom as part of the performance. School B invited their parents to attend a program held on Tuesday and School A parents were invited for Wednesday of the same week. At the last minute, the PK-3 part of the program at School B had to be postponed due to a severe outbreak of chicken pox.

A subsequent time of celebration had been planned for the CDAs' and assistants' accomplishments scheduled for Week 29. Another adjustment had to be made here. The CDAs and assistants felt it was too expensive to purchase refreshments for the parent programs, so the MPRT used the allotted celebration money to buy cookies for each class and the CDAs each brought a gallon of fruit drink or "kool aid." (All money for celebrations came from the MPRT's personal funds.)

One news release combining a description of both of the originally scheduled programs was submitted to the local newspaper for publication. A separate article was written for publication when the delayed PK-3 program at School B was presented for parents two weeks later.

Consideration was made as to whether or not we stayed with our mission statement phrases and accomplished our goals. The participants reflected on how far we had come as

a team. The MPRT asked for individuals to anonymously write their feelings about the process and the project. In what way(s) has your relationship with the MPRT been helpful in the classroom each week? What could be done differently next time to improve the team process? (Appendix A)

The last weekly meeting had been planned as a final celebration; however, the time for meeting was "swallowed up" in the flurry of activity required to complete end-of-school-year paper work and classroom packing.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

The problem was 15 non-certified people were placed in instructional-type positions and did not have professional expertise to carry out an effective program in the public school setting. The Child Development Associates (CDAs) were unable to write detailed, age-appropriate lesson plans in compliance with school district requirements. The attendance reports from the first two months were returned by the federal program office with multiple errors on them. There were numerous errors on the administration and report sheets of the DIAL-R when it was administered as a pre-test. And two of the CDAs expressed that they felt intimidated by the presence of the MPRT. The CDAs, assistants, and MPRT focused on improving accuracy with program-required paper work and better communication with each other through weekly inservice sessions held at each school site and additional individual coaching.

The first expected outcome stated "by the end of implementation at least four of the five teaching CDAs will do their work correctly as evidenced by lesson plans and

other required paper work." The actual outcome: lesson plans were completed to the satisfaction of the respective administrators by all five instructors. By the end of implementation, attendance records were kept in accordance with the expectations of the school, district, state, and federal requirements by four of the five instructors. Two of the five instructors were able to complete the administration and recording of the DIAL-R post-test with less than five errors. The other three instructors needed the assistance of the MPRT to accurately complete the report forms and paper work associated with the DIAL-R.

The second expected outcome expressed that "at least four of the five teaching CDAs and six of the ten assistants would show trust and respect for each other and the MPRT as evidenced by the cessation of reports of intimidation replaced by positive comments regarding the MPRT's classroom visits." The reports of feeling intimidated ceased as the CDAs and assistants became more accustomed to the MPRT. There were specific, positive comments such as "the Migrant Resource Teacher has been helpful with having weekly meetings informing us of different situations" and "the MPRT has been helpful in answering a lot of question [sic] concern [sic] field trip [sic] and classroom activities." One of the assistants who found herself alone and in charge of one of the classrooms many mornings while the CDA was on maternity leave wrote "she have [sic] been helpful monitors [sic]

classroom and playground activities appropriate for prekingergarten [sic]."

The final expected outcome said, "by the end of implementation each team member will acknowledge the roles and responsibilities of every other team member as reported on a survey with a score of 12 out of 16 items (Appendix B)." As the final survey responses were tabulated, five people replied with 16 of 16 items completed correctly; one person had 15 of 16 responses correct; three participants answered 13 of 16 accurately; two individuals gave correct answers orally, but did not want to put anything in writing; and four said they would take the paper and get it back to the writer, but nothing was returned.

Discussion

This practicum was successful to a degree as described in the previous section of this chapter. However, there were three very pertinent negative aspects which need to be discussed.

First, the CDAs and assistants really wanted to do a good job in their positions. In fact, the desire to do a good job was so intense that they could not admit anything they did was less than perfect. Sanborn (1990) recommended that each team meeting should contain a time for enumerating accomplishments and blunders. That suggestion was incorporated into the agenda for the weekly meetings;

however, other than the MPRT, the participants only admitted two blunders in the entire time of implementation. This also seemed to contribute to the breakdown in the relationship which had been building in a positive manner until the CDAs and assistants at School B read the practicum problem statement and quickly called to confer with the CDAs and assistants at School A. It appeared that the participants were behaving in accordance with the findings of Shulman (1988) and Hegler (1986) when they reported that first-year teachers in a comparable situation feared appearing incompetent and, therefore, were reluctant to seek help from veteran teachers or building administrators.

Second, the CDAs at both schools many times vocalized their anger for being required to perform all of the same tasks of certified teachers in the public school settings, but with an additional hour to work and approximately two-thirds of the pay. Discussions of additional years of education involved for certified teachers were of no solace nor were words of encouragement toward furthering their own education. Pointing out to them that they said the tasks had been the same at their previous day care centers for even less pay was of little consolation, although one CDA said she had thought of that. Eventually, the union bargained for the CDAs to have the same hours as the teachers, but the salary was a continuing sore spot.

The third point related to the confusion with

communication at the various program levels. Time after time, it seemed that there were too many "chiefs" trying to dictate what to do when and how. One "authority" would give a directive about wanting something done in a particular way by a specific date. While the MPRT was relaying the message to the CDAs, another "authority" would send out a communique wanting more (or less) about the same subject, but done in a different way or at a different time. In one instance, as the MPRT was relating a message with directions to a building principal, a secretary interrupted that there was a call on line 3--someone else was giving opposing directions on the same subject within a matter of hours. Several similar incidents happened early in the school year and the principals, MPRT, and CDAs all hoped communication would improve. However, the situation did not change. The constant contradiction of information was a contributing factor in the communication distrust between the MPRT and CDAs as evidenced in the comment of one CDA on her final response survey. She said, "Improvement needed--The migrant resourse [sic] teacher needs to know the required information the first time of instructions."

Recommendations

As was mentioned earlier in this document, having Child Development Associates (CDAs) in the preschool classes with a Resource Teacher as consultant was a new venture the school

district decided to try in order to serve more children with a shrinking amount of money. The CDAs desired to do a good job within the public school setting but did not have the additional formal training of a certified classroom teacher. To assist the CDAs with a successful experience, the writer would recommend on-going, mandatory, staff development through regularly scheduled inservice sessions presented by the Resource Teacher for the CDAs and assistants at least fortnightly.

Some of the topics for inclusion grew naturally from the daily/weekly classroom observations of the MPRT. However, should another individual desire to replicate this practicum, the writer would highly recommend including the CDAs and assistants in the identification of the problem or problems to target for inclusion in the problem statement. Had this MPRT engaged the CDAs and assistants in identifying what they would perceive as something to work on as the problem and had they formulated its statement, it may have precluded some of the hostility encountered by the writer when the CDAs read the problem statement several weeks after the initial occurrences of the identified problems. The MPRTs who were originally consulted remembered well the cited incidences; the CDAs had forgotten their existence.

There was a dichotomy which developed in regard to staff development. The CDAs were eager to attend training sessions which were scheduled for ALL CDAs across the district; and

until the reading of the Practicum Problem, they were willing to have site-specific issues addressed as well. Although all things were basically equal (approximately 30 CDAs and six MPRTs), one of the main district-wide inservice sessions seemed to be beneficial and one "bombed." The science, reading, and math "make-and-take" workshop seemed to give the CDAs ideas which they returned to their schools and used. The DIAL-R training workshop (with approximately the same participants) was a minor fiasco and the MPRTs had to retrain the CDAs at each school site separately.

The main difference seemed to be that for the "make-and-take" the CDAs were divided into smaller groups after one main session and during the DIAL-R all of the CDAs were in the same session but working with a partner. Therefore, the writer recommended breaking into smaller, rotating, training groups at the same location for similar inservice sessions.

The second issue pertained to pay for the CDAs. It was the writer's opinion that the ideal situation would move the prekindergarten classes off the elementary campuses so the CDAs would be less likely to compare themselves to certified elementary teachers for tasks performed without regard to additional training and education levels. However, recognizing that this may not be an option in many instances, the next best arrangement seemed to be placement in a separated section of the campus. This recommendation grew from the fact that the CDAs (located in portables on a

separate part of the campus from the rest of the classes) at School A seemed to complain less than the CDAs at School B (located in portables surrounded by other grade levels).

A related recommendation, suggested by the previously mentioned collaborating MPRTs, would be to have someone from the district department of personnel/payroll address the pay issue at the beginning-of-the-year required CDA meeting when ALL of the CDAs would be in attendance to hear exactly the same thing. A written follow-up communication would be desirable for less likelihood of festering rumors.

The third recommendation appertained to program directives. The writer recommended that the MPRT ask for clarification of a specific, short chain of command with such direct questions as "Whom shall I expect to give me procedural directions? In the event that conflicting information arrives via PROFS or through any other channel, with whom should I confer for final say before I give directions to my CDAs?"

The writer offered the above suggestions with the desire of enabling future Resource Teachers and Child Development Associates as together they build the skills of the CDAs in public school settings.

Dissemination

As a contribution to the further consideration of the use of Child Development Associates in public school

classrooms the information in this document has been discussed with the school district level federal program people who are in positions to make policy decisions and program adjustments. A copy was given to the head resource teacher at the area level office. The writer's immediate supervisor, the base school's principal, was also provided a copy.

For broader dissemination, a copy of this practicum was made available through NOVA Southeastern University, Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and an article was prepared for submission to a professional publication.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

MPRT'S CLASSROOM VISITS

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Please write your response to the following question on the lines below.

In what way(s) has your relationship with the Migrant Prekindergarten Resource Teacher been helpful?

What could we do differently next time to improve the team process?

APPENDIX B

SURVEY OF JOB DESCRIPTION AWARENESS

SURVEY OF JOB DESCRIPTION AWARENESS

On the line to the left of each statement, write "MPRT" if the statement is only a responsibility of the MPRT; write "CDA" if the statement is only a responsibility of the CDA; write "co" if the statement is a cooperative responsibility for all team members to share in its completion.

_____ 1. Initiates learning activities. (co)

_____ 2. Plans, teaches, and organizes activities. (CDA)

_____ 3. Monitors appropriateness of classroom activities. (MPRT)

_____ 4. Provides in-service and evaluates pre- and post-test results. (MPRT)

_____ 5. Offers monthly parent meetings to establish rapport between school and family and to enhance nurturing skills of parents. (CDA)

_____ 6. Keeps the school center principal or designee informed of program and classroom operations. (MPRT)

_____ 7. Monitors playground safety. (co)

_____ 8. Keeps accurate records and reports data to appropriate office person. (CDA)

_____ 9. Guides children's play activities. (co)

_____ 10. Monitors children's hygiene practices. (co)

_____ 11. Makes daily classroom visitation on a rotating basis. (MPRT)

_____ 12. Monitors cleanliness and orderliness of classroom materials and equipment and makes necessary corrections. (co)

_____ 13. Attends appropriate district and area meetings. (co)

_____ 14. Prepares lesson plans and implements curriculum. (CDA)

_____ 15. Prepares work/play centers for specific activities. (co)

_____ 16. Guides children during specific learning activities. (co)